

## INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

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### MEETING COMPETITION FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

What steps can be taken by local governments to meet the competition for competent employees?

City governments are faced with competition for employees not only from the armed services and from private industry, but also from other public agencies. Both rank-and-file employees and key personnel are affected. While adequate pay is important, other factors are involved and this report mentions briefly some approaches that may help city officials.

Adequate Pay. Some city employees will leave their jobs because of the advantage of higher pay in private industry. Cities should keep their pay levels comparable with representative rates in private and other public employment in the area. Officials should know the local and national trends with regard to specific jobs and make necessary changes before employees start leaving. Position classification and pay plans should be prepared and adopted. An annual survey of local public and private pay rates is essential, and the pay plan should provide for within-grade periodic salary increases based upon merit and ability.

Review Recruiting Practices. Perhaps certain qualifications can be lowered, such as experience, for example, if accompanied by careful placement and adequate supervision. Residence requirements should be waived for all jobs, and if recruiting should become difficult for some positions women can be employed for temporary service. Perhaps many positions can be filled satisfactorily on a part-time basis or by two part-time employees. In some areas two or more cities can arrange inter-governmental transfers in order to utilize fully the skill of a particular employee.

Good Working Conditions. Adequate pay is not the only factor in keeping good employees on the job. A city that has made provision for group health, accident, and hospital insurance coverage has a better chance of holding employees than a city that does not have such a plan. A broad accident prevention program with emphasis on safety training of city employees is important. Paid vacations with more liberal leaves granted for longer periods of service, together with provision for sick leave and other leaves of absence should be adopted.

Employees will have more pride in their work and greater "job satisfaction" if they are provided with good equipment needed in their work and if they can work in places that are clean and attractive. A credit union is another important job factor for many employees who occasionally need to borrow money. Still another job benefit is a sound retirement plan. Cities should either join a state-administered plan or set up some kind of retirement system.

Adopt Promotion Policy. The more competent and aggressive employees may leave municipal employment when they see no promotional opportunities ahead. A good offset to this in the larger cities is a specific program for promoting career employees across departmental lines. Promotional opportunities and how employees can prepare for them should be fully explained. Employees should be assigned to jobs that will make use of their highest skills.

(Over)

Job Controls. It is good policy not to fill jobs when the supply of workers is low or inferior but rather to eliminate and consolidate positions. Requests of department heads for personnel additions or replacements should be analyzed as to need in relation to work load and other factors. Perhaps employees can be transferred to fill existing vacancies or to meet increased work loads.

Job pirating by employers and job shopping by employees can be effectively discouraged by adopting a plan similar to that put into effect in 1942 in the Detroit area. Employers in essential activities were not permitted to hire or solicit workers from each other unless applicants presented certificates of release.

A policy should be adopted with regard to requesting military deferments. This probably would be done on an individual basis after study of the importance of the employee's job, difficulty of replacement, and so on. The city should not grant an employee a leave of absence to work in a defense industry, except in a particular situation when the employee can play an important part in an essential industry.

Training. In-service training and apprenticeship programs are needed to train replacements and also to keep up the interest and performance level of older employees. Employees who are properly trained in their job skills are happier on the job and can turn out better work and more work. Supervisors can be trained in human relations and methods of supervision and department heads in administrative management.

Keep Employees Informed. Employees should be kept informed on matters of most interest to them by person-to-person contact, in-service training programs, personnel manuals, employee handbooks, newsletters, employee publications, bulletin boards, and other means. Personnel rules should be issued in attractive pamphlet form like the illustrated manuals of such cities as Fort Worth, Dayton, and Pasadena.

City employees also should be informed on the advantages of municipal employment. When employees stop to think of the good working conditions, vacation and leave policy, retirement benefits, and tenure they have built up over a period of years they may not be as easily attracted by defense industries. These advantages have a dollar value as illustrated in a folder issued by the city of Marquette, Michigan. This folder is reproduced below except for the last page which set forth in large type the following statement signed by James R. Pollock who was then city manager of Marquette:

"It is believed that the City Commission has placed Marquette in the forefront of American cities in respect to job dividends to employees. If these dividends give the employees additional satisfaction in working for the city, they are worth their cost. It is recognized that the city employees appreciate these dividends and will do their jobs to the best of their ability and give whole-hearted cooperation."

Adopt Merit System and Personnel Rules. Perhaps most important of all is a comprehensive personnel program based on the merit system. Competent employees will not stay long on the job if they discover that considerations other than merit are more important in connection with advancement and pay increases. Cities that have not taken this step should adopt a merit system ordinance and personnel rules. (For more information, officials are referred to earlier MIS Reports dealing with personnel matters: No. 39, Granting Sick Leave with Pay; No. 40, Procedure in Establishing the Merit System; No. 41, Personnel Rules and Regulations; No. 45, Cost-of-Living Pay Adjustment Plans; No. 47, Preventing Accidents in Municipal Employment; No. 60, Keeping City Employees Informed; No. 67, Establishing Job and Work Controls; No. 69, How to Make a Salary and Wage Survey; No. 78, Development of Department Heads; and No. 86, Pay Rates for Selected City Jobs in January, 1951.

(The eight pages reproduced on this and the next three pages are from a 4 x 9-inch folder entitled "Job Dividends" issued by the City of Marquette, Michigan, to inform city employees on the advantages of working for the City.)

# Job "Dividends"

FOR EMPLOYEES  
OF THE  
CITY OF MARQUETTE  
MICHIGAN



For the Information of Employees

*Average Yearly Earnings*  
**\$2,841**  
*Peacetime Record*

City employees earnings were at a new peacetime record. Total salaries and wages amounted to \$441,677.00 with average yearly earnings per permanent employee amounting to \$2,841.00. The cost of living in the Marquette area hit a new high during 1947. However, the increase in average earnings of the City employees has equalled the increase in the cost of living in the Marquette area.

# \$450<sup>00</sup>

In 1947, the city spent over \$63,500.00 for extra benefits for its employees. Most of these benefits ranging up to \$450.00 or more per employee, were provided on a voluntary basis. Some one has called these benefits, "Job Dividends", an apt description since they are in addition to regular wages and salaries.



*what are these  
Job  
Dividends?*



These job dividends include the following:

**SICK LEAVE WITH PAY**

**PENSIONS**

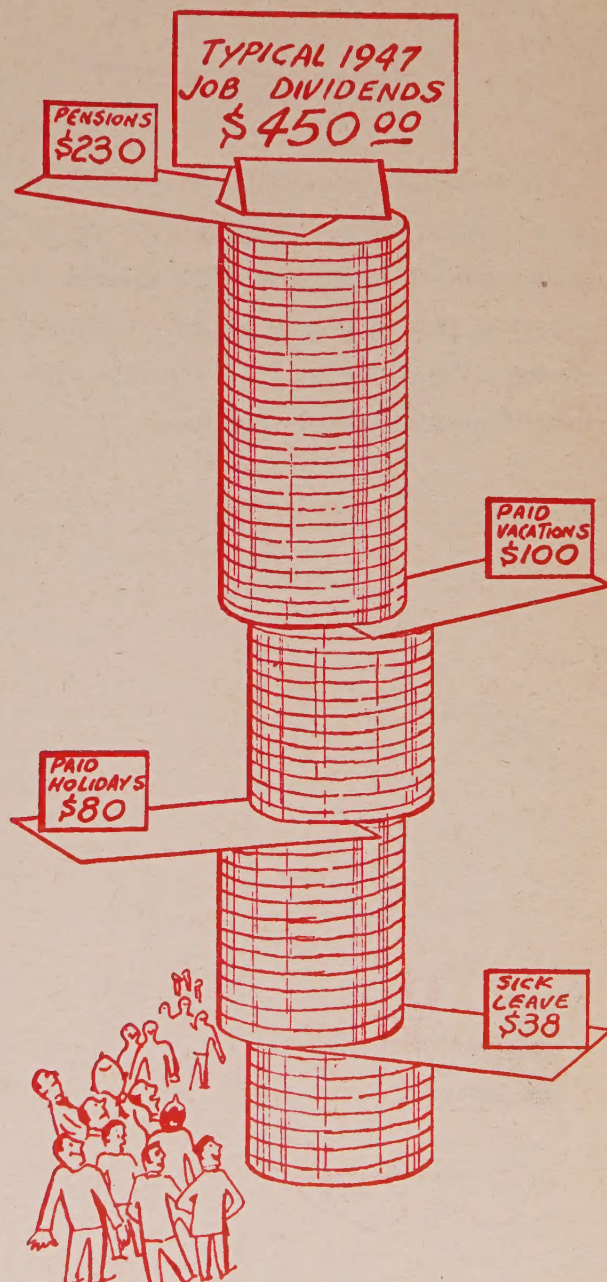
**VACATION WITH PAY**

**PAID HOLIDAYS**

The cost to the city of its sick leave policy amounted to \$5400 in 1947 or \$38 per employee.



The City of Marquette started a pension system for its employees in 1946. The cost to the city of this pension plan in 1947 was \$32,273.00. There are now 8 employees being paid a pension as a result of this plan.



## Paid Vacations

The vacation policy of the City has been broadened to include vacation with pay to all permanent employees. The amount of vacation per employee is two working weeks. Vacations in 1947 cost the city more than \$100.00 per employee.



## Paid Holidays

Eight times during the year, New Years Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Armistice Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas, the City pays its employees full wages for those eligible for payment of these holidays. In addition to the regular holidays there were two others included in 1947, namely, the Saturdays following Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, thereby giving a long weekend to those employees who wanted to take a trip out of the city.

This cost the city over \$11,000.00 which is equivalent to a job dividend of approximately \$80 per employee.